

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The claims are 1 to 24.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that claims 7 and 9 to 11 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. However, for reasons set forth below, it is considered that all of the claims in this application are in condition for allowance.

Claims 1 to 6 and 13 to 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by WO 03/055841 published July 10, 2003.

Claims 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Higuchi et al., U.S. 2003/0054117 in view of WO 03/055841 cited above.

These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As noted in the Official Action, the rejections rely on WO 03/055841, published July 10, 2003. However, this reference is antedated by Applicants' Japanese priority application 2002-349167, filed November 29, 2002.

What is disclosed in the priority application is substantially the same as that in the present application.

It is also noted that the PTO has not acknowledged receipt of a certified copy of the priority document. However, this application is based on an international application in which the priority document was filed. Accordingly, the Examiner is requested to obtain the certified copy of Applicants' Japanese priority application, or at least a copy thereof, from WIPO. Please see MPEP § 1896 III on page 1800-208 in this regard. If necessary, kindly consult with a Special Program Examiner, as recommended by this section of the MPEP.

No further issues remaining, allowance of this application is respectfully requested.


If the Examiner has any comments or proposals for expediting prosecution, please contact undersigned at the telephone number below.

THE COMMISSIONER IS AUTHORIZED
TO CHARGE ANY DEFICIENCY IN THE
FEES FOR THIS PAPER TO DEPOSIT
ACCOUNT NO. 23-0975

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Respectfully submitted,

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